

# Diversified farms seen future wave with a little help

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KAHULUI — Diversified agriculture is second only to sugar among the agricultural industries in Hawaii, and it's destined to become No. 1, said Ron Terry, president of the Hawaii Farm Bureau Federation.

And like sugar, diversified agriculture could use a little help.

Terry, who serves as the chief lobbyist for small farmers in the Legislature, said in an interview Friday farmers could do a lot for themselves. Not the least of those things is for farmers to cooperate a little more among themselves.

But that's one of the goals of the Hawaii Farm Bureau in its legislative list — a little help from the state in developing a plan to coordinate marketing and acreage planning among farmers.

"There's a lot of talk about self-sufficiency for Hawaii, but Hawaii farmers still come in for seconds in the markets," Terry said. To some degree, that's their own doing, he admits.

"If you go to Safeway and tell them you're going to have a container of lettuce next week, and you don't have that container, you better not plan on going back to Safeway," he said.

In a nutshell, that's been the problem for local farmers. They haven't been able to assure the consistency of supply that supermarkets demand. So the markets buy from the Mainland first, and if there isn't enough, they buy locally.

Terry said there is a potential for reversing the situation. Diversified agriculture already has been growing in Hawaii. What is needed is some cooperation, among the farmers and with the government.

Assuredly, the state is doing a great deal to help farmers. Terry adds, though, the state also needs to develop a uniform definition of what is a farmer. He said that's another Farm Bureau goal.

The point is that the state does provide programs to help farmers, such as loan programs, or development of agricultural parks. But it has no clear definition of who qualifies for such programs. Terry said the concern grew out of the work involved in developing rules for

as it remains as guidelines."

Terry said the state also might take a look at its handling of land use laws. He referred to the Forbes magazine article which suggested that the state has worked hard at protecting agriculture to the detriment of other industries.

The state does effectively protect agricultural lands, Terry said. "But protection of agricultural land does not mean non-use of agricultural land," he said.

"What we need is a system that truly evaluates agricultural land, but also considers social needs," he said.

The Farm Bureau supports development of agricultural parks. But Terry referred again to the problem of lack of coordination on the kinds of crops being grown.

"In the agricultural parks, there is a real lack of information on how much of any crop that we need," he said. "There isn't a guy in the state today who can tell you what's needed."

That includes both the market, available for any given crop, and the amount of acreage needed to grow the crop to meet the market. Terry said that would be one of the goals of a coordinated marketing and acreage plan.

There are other items on the Farm Bureau's list of legislative concerns. They include:

- Pesticides. The Farm Bureau is concerned about the problems caused by the milk and watercress scares last year. Terry said he is hoping for funding of a workshop for farmers who use pesticides to develop "a comprehensive, independently controlled pesticide safety program."

- "Farmers need to get control over the problem, or they're going to get stepped on by the regulatory people," he said.

- Rustling. The Farm Bureau is seeking changes in the law on search and seizure to help in apprehending persons who may be taking cattle from open ranges.

- Taro growing. The Farm Bureau is supporting a request for \$100,000 to help resolve a flooding problem faced by taro growers on Kauai. Terry said the Hanalei River has been flooding because of heavy silt-